

PUBLIC HEARING
October 18, 2012
5:01 P.M.
Common Council Chambers
Minutes

MAYOR KASPRZAK FORMALLY OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 5:01 PM TO HEAR PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED 2013 BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF PLATTSBURGH.

Public Comment Period:

Lonnie Fredette 13 Prospect Avenue said I guess the reason that I am here tonight is predominately for my father. My father has lived here all his life. My major concern is I'm quite distressed at the language that I've seen not only on the website that you've made concerning the budget and the future. I guess my concern is does the Mayor and the Common Council feel that other than making statements or comments using adjectives and adverbs such as unsustainable, unsupportable, uncontrollable. Whether or not the Common Council or the Mayor at some point and time is going to be able to come out and let elderly citizens like my father who are on a limited income know that within a year or two he's not going to be able to afford the taxes and stay in his home. He apparently has this crazy idea that because he raised a family of 5 children and lived in this community all his life being a businessman. That he should be able to live out his life at the family homestead. It occurs to me that if the scenario that the Mayor is presenting of substantial tax increases and I'm well aware of the conditions and the factors that are affecting this situation; pension costs what not, retirement. Matter of fact it is painfully aware that not only does the city have a serious viability issue but the city school district is in exactly the same mess. They've taken the same approach of taking 2 million dollars out of the 4 million dollars that they had left in their savings account. So basically they're looking at exactly the same exploding tax situation that the city is looking at almost simultaneously in the same time frame. So coming full circle around the tree I'll reemphasize. I think it is certainly commendable that the Mayor has decided to use these types of adjectives and adverbs. But I'm just wondering when or under what circumstances that the Mayor or the City Common Council is going to actually come out and let the citizens of Plattsburgh, our most vulnerable citizens, our elderly, retired and our economically stressed, I'll call them poor. Because there is a serious divide in Plattsburgh that represents what's happening nationally. A very limited percent that are making very good money and the bulk of the citizens of Plattsburgh that are definitely at this point middle income and falling very dramatically in to what would traditionally look like poverty. Is the approach of the Mayor and the Common Council going to be to continue to use this type of phraseology which basically seems to me to be more of an approach of rearranging the chairs on the titanic. Or are they going to come out and just tell the citizens of Plattsburgh straight forward especially those individuals on a limited income and those most vulnerable that they are no longer going to be able to live in the

City of Plattsburgh in 2 or 3 years.

Mayor Kasprzak said I normally wouldn't do this. And I would love to spend an hour talking to you because I could refute a lot of your comments but I will do this for you. First of all, everything that was in my statement is from me not the Council. And we have problems that are coming and I don't lie and I'm the most straight forward person you'll ever meet whether you like the comments or not. By Charter law, and I don't necessarily agree with it, by October 1st of every year, the Mayor has to make some decisions and come out with a budget and we don't have all the pieces in place from October to December so it's kind of a funny Charter law but that's the way it works. From October 1st until the end of December the Common Council then takes my budget calls all the department heads in and goes over all the budgets. And they will try I am sure to save money like they've always done since I have been here. And then by Charter law the second Thursday in January of the next year the Council will then vote on their budget. I guarantee you in between all that time that the Press and the media is going to have updates on the budget process. So that's the process that will happen.

Lonnie Fredette 13 Prospect Avenue said I don't doubt and I'm not here to imply that the Mayor or the Common Council is not doing their very best in a very bad situation. What I'm saying is that the situation that's presented to the taxpayers of Plattsburgh is essentially an exploding time bomb that is only a year or two away. My point is when are the appropriate administrators...

Mayor Kasprzak said you didn't listen to my answer they are going to work through the end of December and as their budget unfolds the numbers will come out for the community.

Lonnie Fredette 13 Prospect Avenue said so the numbers come out for the community and statements are made again that...

Mayor Kasprzak said what you are reading are my statements. So don't include the Council on that they may not make those statements.

Lonnie Fredette 13 Prospect Avenue said I know that the gentleman did make the statement, Mr. Calnon is I pronouncing it, I get nervous whenever we spend down the fund balance like that. Perhaps if I was making a statement I would say I get uncontrollably nervous. I guess my point is very simple you can make these types of statements and use these types of words. Uncontrollable, unsustainable, unaffordable my point is very simple that doesn't translate to the average 75/80 year old person out there that Plattsburgh is going to become a place where he can't afford to live anymore in 2 years.

Mayor Kasprzak said if you don't think that everybody around this table isn't working to keep it affordable then you ought to take the message back to your father and tell him we're doing the best we can.

Lonnie Fredette 13 Prospect Avenue said first of all I am not here speaking for my father. I'm here with my father in my heart. But the statements I am making I am making for myself. As I say I am not here questioning your concern with keeping the budget under control. What I'm concerned about is that the public is not aware that this situation is substantially more dire than adverbs like uncontrollable, unsustainable and unaffordable.

Public Hearing adjourned at: 5:11 pm